June 9, 2011

The Honorable Harry Reid
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Reid

We are writing on behalf of the American Association of Engineering Societies (AAES) representing 750,000 engineers throughout the United States, to express our support for federal efforts to promote K-12 Science- Technology-Education-Mathematics (STEM) education. Specifically, we urge you to support and become a co-sponsor of:

- S. 969, The “Engineering Education (E2) for Innovation Act” by Senators Gillibrand (D-NY) and Snowe (R-ME);
- S. 758, the “STEM Master Teacher Corps Act”, by Senator Al Franken (D-MN); and,
- S. 716, the “Inspiration Innovation School Grant Program,” by Senator Jean Shaheen (D-NH).

If there is one thing the entire engineering community can agree on, it is that our education system is not meeting the needs of our increasingly technological society. Many elementary, middle, and high school students do not receive adequate instruction in math and science, such that the possibility of studying engineering at the college level is effectively precluded. Moreover, many elementary, middle, and high school students receive little or no exposure to engineering. As a result, students who have the aptitude to be successful engineers never have an opportunity to develop an interest in this career path. Consequently, too few well-qualified students are pursuing careers in engineering.

The members of AAES devote countless volunteer hours and funding in their communities to promote STEM education at the K-12 level. However, it is not enough, as this is a challenge facing the entire Nation, the federal government must be partner with state and local governments in finding the solution. Encouraging the best and brightest of our young people to pursue careers in STEM fields is a key to the success of the Nation.

AAES, a 501(c)(3) organization, is the umbrella organization for engineering and engineering related professional societies in the United States. AAES works with its member societies to advance the knowledge and practice of engineering in the public interest.

Thank you for the opportunity for AAES to express our views. If you have questions or need more information, please contact Carol W. Bowers, AAES Interim Executive Director at cbowers@aaes.org or 703-295-6352.

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